

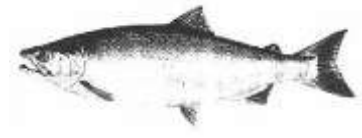
ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

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Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #30

GILLNET FISHERIES: Deep gear was permitted in the Coghill, Eshamy, Montague, and Unakwik districts starting on Monday, July 1.

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: The Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Thursday, July 4 for a 60-hour commercial fishing period. Waters within the Chinook salmon inside closure area will be OPEN during this commercial fishing period. The cumulative sonar count through July 2 was 970,044 fish whereas the anticipated inriver passage range for this date is 532,040 – 817,061 fish. The count from midnight through 6:00 am this morning was 1,943 fish, which projects to a daily total of 7,772 fish. The minimum inriver passage objective for today is 6,837 fish. For the week ending June 29, the actual Copper River delta survey index count was 39,660 versus an anticipated range of 17,627–41,665 sockeye salmon. An aerial survey of the Copper River Delta is anticipated to be flown this week. The hatchery contributions from the period that closed on June 25 was 33% Gulkana Hatchery. The preliminary harvest estimate for the fishing period that closed Tuesday, July 2 was 90,000 sockeye salmon with 407 deliveries reported. The cumulative Copper River District commercial harvest to date is 8,500 Chinook salmon and 1.36 million sockeye salmon.

The Copper River District is open to subsistence fishing concurrent with commercial fishing periods until closed at the end of the season. Subsistence permits may be obtained during regular business hours. The Cordova ADF&G office is open to the public Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 12:00 pm and 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm. **Subsistence permits are not available outside of regular office hours.**

BERING RIVER DISTRICT: The Bering River District will open at 7:00 am on Thursday, July 4 for a 60-hour commercial period. For the week ending June 29, the actual Bering River District survey index count was 17,100 versus a minimum anticipated range of 6,092–13,402 sockeye salmon. The next aerial survey of the Bering River District is anticipated to be flown next week. No harvest was reported for the commercial fishing period that closed Tuesday, July 2.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: The Port Chalmers Subdistrict will open to commercial drift gillnet fishing for an 84-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 4 with an additional 60-hour period anticipated to begin at 8:00 am on Monday, July 8. This schedule is anticipated to remain in effect until further notice. The western boundary of the Port Chalmers Subdistrict is defined by lines from 60°20.00'N., 147°26.59'W. to 60°14.75'N., 147°35.35'W. to 60°02.50'N., 147°44.41'W. Regulatory closed waters and anadromous stream closures within the Port Chalmers Subdistrict will not be in effect until further notice. Harvest from the period that closed Sunday, June 30 was 86,000 chum salmon with 206 deliveries reported.

COGHILL DISTRICT: The Coghill District, excluding the Bettles Bay Subdistrict and the **WNH Hatchery Escapement Exclusion Zone (HEEZ)**, will open to commercial drift gillnet fishing for a 60-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 4. The WNH HEEZ consists of waters of Lake Bay north of a latitude line at 60°47.78'N. Harvest from the period that closed Saturday, June 29 was 208,000 chum and 18,000 sockeye salmon with 766 deliveries reported. Cumulative harvest through this date was 1.38 million chum and 48,000 sockeye salmon. As of July 3, PWSAC estimated 210,000-250,000 chum salmon in the WNH SHA. PWSAC's chum salmon broodstock goal is 216,000 fish. The cumulative passage at the weir through July 2 is 6,449 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated count of 5,717 fish. A total of 156,000 sockeye salmon are forecast to return to Coghill Lake, with 126,000 fish anticipated to be available for common property harvest. The harvest timing for these sockeye salmon is from June 1 – August 1.

ESHAMY DISTRICT: The Eshamy District will open to commercial gillnet fishing for a 60-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 4. **The MBH AGZ will be closed during this fishing period.** Harvest from the period that closed Saturday, June 29 was 15,000 chum and 73,000 sockeye salmon with 557 deliveries reported. Cumulative harvest through

this date was 322,000 chum and 139,000 sockeye salmon. A total of 1.13 million sockeye salmon are forecast to return to MBH. The harvest timing for these sockeye salmon is from June 1 – August 1.

UNAKWIK DISTRICT: The Unakwik District will open to commercial drift gillnet and purse seine harvest for a 24-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 4. No harvest was reported for the fishing period that closed Monday, July 1.

SEINE FISHERIES: VFDA began its pink salmon cost recovery fishing program on Thursday, June 20. VFDA has collected approximately 73% of the assigned pink salmon revenue goal through July 2. Cost recovery pink salmon harvest on Tuesday, July 2 was approximately 209,000 fish with an average weight of approximately 3.1 pounds per fish. Time and area for the next commercial fishing period targeting VFDA enhanced pink salmon will be based on cost recovery progress, run entry, and harvest results from the July 3 fishery. It is anticipated that there will be an announcement on Thursday, July 4 providing an update on cost recovery fishing progress, and preliminary results from Wednesday's fishery.

Fishing periods in the Eastern and Southeastern districts for Wednesday, July 3 remain as previously announced.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT: On the east side of Knight Island, the waters of Marsha Bay, west of 147° 39.75' W. long., will open to purse seine fishing for an 84-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 4, with an additional 60-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Monday, July 8. This schedule is anticipated to remain in effect until further notice. Anadromous stream closures within Marsha Bay will not be in effect until further notice. These openings are intended to target a forecast return of 6,400 remote release sockeye salmon. These sockeye salmon have an average run timing of June 15 – August 1.

The AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will open to purse seine fishing at 8:00 am Thursday, July 4 for 84 hours, with an additional 60-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Monday, July 8. This schedule is anticipated to remain in effect until further notice. Anadromous stream closures within the AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will not be in effect until further notice. The harvest estimate from the 84-hour period that ended on Sunday, June 30 is 2 Chinook, 6,180 sockeye, 11,900 pink, and 28,200 chum salmon with 27 deliveries reported. A total of 306,000 remote release chum salmon are forecast to return to the AFK Hatchery. The run timing for these chum salmon is from June 1 – July 27.

The next scheduled salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to occur by 2:00 pm Thursday, July 4.

Permit holders are advised that unscheduled announcements based on current escapement data may occur at any time inseason either establishing an additional period or extending an open period.

Announcement recordings are available for **gillnet fisheries at 907-424-7535 and seine fisheries at 907-424-7345. In addition, announcement recordings are available in Anchorage at 267-2843.**

Additionally, announcements, inseason harvest data, and escapement data are available at the following web addresses:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.main> (Copper River homepage) or

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.main> (Prince William Sound homepage).

Unless otherwise specified, all openings are clock openings based on Alaska Daylight Time, which is based on Coordinated Universal Time and may be obtained by calling 303-499-7111.

The department encourages commercial permit holders to renew their licenses early and to check their CFEC vessel registration stickers to make sure that they are current.

The department also encourages permit holders to report observed violations to Wildlife Safeguard at 800-478-3377. Reports are anonymous and cash rewards may be paid for successful prosecution of violations.

PWS commercial fishers are reminded that area fisheries often necessitate fishing in close proximity to marine mammals. Under the Marine Mammals Protection Act (MMPA), the PWS drift gillnet fishery is classified as a Category II fishery. Participants in Category I and II fisheries must be registered in the Marine Mammal Avoidance Program (MMAP) to be authorized for lawful incidental, but not intentional, marine mammal takes during fishing. However, this authorization explicitly does **not** exempt holders of commercial fishing permits from the MMPA prohibition on takes of marine mammals listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. As a participant in the PWS drift gillnet fishery you are automatically registered in the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As a participant in a Category II fishery, you must:

- Maintain an MMAP Authorization Certificate, or a photocopy, on board the vessel while engaging in any of the fisheries identified on the reverse side of the certificate. For non-vessel or set net fisheries, the enclosed Certificate, or a photocopy, must be in the possession of the

permit holder during fishing operations. This Certificate, in combination with a current, valid state or Federal fishing permit, will serve as your authorization to incidentally take non-endangered or non-threatened marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.

- Report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals within 48 hours of returning from the trip during which these takes occurred using the MMAP Mortality/Injury Reporting Form (visit http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap_reporting_form.pdf for a copy).
- If so requested, take an observer aboard your vessel.

Purse seine and set gillnet gear are classified as a category III fisheries under the MMPA. Category III fishery participants are automatically exempted from the incidental take prohibition in the MMPA. Therefore, you do not need to maintain the MMAP certificate aboard your vessel, but must report any incidental takes of marine mammals within 48 hours of the incident or your return to port. Such reports must be made on the Marine Mammals Authorization Program Mortality/Injury Reporting Form.

Because some marine mammals are also listed under the Endangered Species Act, incidental takes are also regulated under that act and are not authorized. **All** MMPA category fisheries are liable for incidentally taking ESA listed species.

Please reference http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa_factsheet.pdf for a list of marine mammals currently listed under the ESA (you should periodically check with the National Marine Fisheries Service for any changes in listed species). Under the ESA, take means to “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” 16U.S.C. 1532(19); and harass means an “intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering.” (50 C.F.R. 17.3).

To reduce the possibility of incidentally taking an ESA listed species and its associated liability ADF&G recommends that:

- Fishermen participating in area fisheries remain vigilant in monitoring gear when marine mammals may be present.
- Fishermen use avoidance measures (e.g., not fishing or relocating fishing activities when marine mammals are present or likely to be present) to minimize interactions with marine mammals.
- Avoid fishing in areas where marine mammals are likely to be present at night or when visibility or weather conditions make it difficult to spot marine mammals.

For further questions concerning marine mammal regulations call NMFS at 907-271-5006.